

critical digest

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New York Theatre Diary

Carousel- closes Aug 29- City Center...Alm new-Re-opens Aug 23 at Imperial...5th Season-Re-opens Sept 5 at Cort...Midsummer Night Dream- Metropolitan Opera 9/21 Old Vic production with Moir Shearer...All Summer Long-Coronet 9/23/ Robert Anderson's new play with Jane Walker, John Kerr...The Boy Friend 9/30. English musical with Julie Andrews.

Strawhat Tryouts

Walk Tall, a new revue by Dean Fuller, Marshall Barer and Arnold Horwitt, drew a pair of mild notices from Herridge, Post and Dias, Variety, on basis of recent presentations at Somerset, Mass and Andover, N.J. If producers John Greenleaf and Chilton Ryan drop about 35% of the material and polish the rest, they will have a pleasant, youthful revue for Broadway in the fall, suggests Post drama editor. With much work it will make a brisk, engaging show, commented Variety mugg. Both critics noted that star Paul Hartman was shortchanged on the material.

Maggie Paak Your Bags, a new comedy drama by Elaine Carrington which debuted at Spring Lake, NJ, is a pedestrian play which stretches its story idea to the limit, pans Geor, Variety...That's Life, new revue at Las Palmas, Hollywood, needs plenty of face lifting to make the grade in NY, remarks Zhito, Billboard. Many sketches are only so-so in show which does introduce some fine new talent....The Farmer's Hotel, John O'Hara's new play produced at Fishkill, NY, is another of those half dramatizations, comments Herridge, Post. The author has tried to adapt his popular novel of the same title to the stage with only partial success. Cast from Actors Studio shows seven months of teamwork spent on polishing script...A Burst of Summer...A B Shiffrin's new comedy presented by Don Walker at Bucks County Playhouse, How Hope, Pa, is the kind of a play that has a feeling of expectancy but leaves the audience unsatisfied, surprises Ward, Variety. Author must give meaning to pleasant, meaningless play.

London Report

Going to the theatre in London is more fun than going to the theatre in NY, sums up Sheaffer, Eagle. In London theatregoing is more relaxed, good-natured happy habit. Many items go into the charm of an English playhouse. First is the agreeable woman usher who takes your order for tea before the show and brings it to your seat at the "interval." The theatres themselves are mellow, picturesque, old fashioned. Also you don't have to buy your tickets months in advance, while ticket prices are less than half NY prices.

Stratford Extended

Stratford, Ontario, Shakespearean Festival has extended its season one week to Aug 28. Taming of the Shrew and Oedipus Rex will be presented.

CD Playgoer's Guide

As theatre statistics are pretty constant in summer, the next up to date issue of "CD" Playgoer's Guide will be Sept 1. Write or phone for any data up to then.

 ' Off Broadway '

Lloyd Gough replaced Edwin Gordon as Andrew Undershat in Greenwich Mews Theatre revival of Major Barbara...David Rosa has leased the Fourth Street Theatre, 83 East 4th St for 5 years. The first production will be The Dybbuk. Henry Alsborg is adapting a new English version of the Hebrew classic...The Cretan Woman is selling tickets through Aug 15. The Players Theatre group has leased the house through Oct and intend to produce a repertory series there.

Aunt Caroline's Will will be the second presentation of Punch Opera at the Cherry Lane, opening Aug 10. It is a 3 act comic opera by Albert Roussel.

Off Broadway Theatre League fees will include \$25 initiation fee and \$1 per 100 seats when shows are running. Plans for 1954-55 season call for the setting up of a central off Broadway ticket office in the midtown area, pooling of physical resources such as sets and props, and combined advertising.

The Chair, the new play at Originals Only, was panned by Kerner, Women's Wear as a gruelling depiction, a tarnished version of The Silver Cord. Tanya Winslow however turns in a good performance is ingratiating and valiant.

The Cretan Woman drew split reviews from the tradespaper reviews. Jess, Variety, thought the first effort of the Players Theatre was a credit to the unit. Jacqueline Brooks scores impressively, while Charles Aidman also stands out. But Francis, Billboard, thought script ran true to the previous Jeffers pattern--all talk, with much of it pitched to a screaming tempo. Production is worthwhile seeing for those who still look for some beauty in theatre, praised Bilowit, Show Business.

 ' Vaudeville '

New Palace stage-show headed by Sibyl Berman, Bob Whalen, Harris & Moreland. Film is "The Silver Lode."

 ' Theatre Book Comments '

"Future Indefinite" by Noel Coward (Doubleday) was applauded by several drama and book critics. Chapman, News, enjoyed second volume of playwright's autobiography better than the first, "Present Indicative." Book marks him as a man to be respected and not just admired for his fabulous and varied talents. Poore, Times, reports that the drumming sound of names being dropped in book which covers 1939-45 makes some of the most impressive musketry of the war. Hardly any of the admirals and generals who served with him have written such martial memoirs. Krutch, Saturday Review, believes most will read it with pleasure, conceive a good deal of real liking for the author, and then put the book down with a sense of bafflement.

"The Art of Noel Coward" by Robert Greacen (British Book Centre) like its title strains for an importance the playwright has not yet earned, pans Krutch, Saturday Review.

"The Noel Coward Song Book" (Simon & Schuster) helps round out the self-portraiture of the writer, approves Poore, Times. Book has the words and music of everything you remember, and some you may not.

"Cavalcade of Comedy" edited by Louis Kronenberger (Simon & Schuster) is a popular anthology of 21 plays with an intelligent and well written introduction, reviews Redman, Saturday Review

Arden Shakespeare's "Henry V" edited by J H Walter (Harvard) is furnished with an interesting introduction and useful notes, okays Redman, Saturday Review.

' Green Room Department '

TICKET RACKET...Black market in theatre tickets is one of those chronic situations which every one bemoans but no one in authority acts upon, states Herald Tribune editorial. Citizens Union is to be congratulated for demanding the Mayor take sterner action. Civic group believes a healthy policy of law enforcement would get quicker and more lasting results than fact finding. Paper is delighted that at last a simple and frontal recommendation has been publicly offered for taking racket out of theatre.

COLUMN TIPS...Martha Wright may accept a "terrific" Broadway offer, hints Kilgallen...Josephine Hutchinson is majoring in psychology at Columbia and may hang out her shingle in a few years, reports Walker.

INVALID TONIC...Edward Specter-John Wharton's projected organization of a \$500,000 corporation to back and produce Broadway shows is another tonic for the Fabulous invalid, cheers Francis, Billboard. 148 stockholders have invested \$2500 or more. Investors will share in dividends but will have no say in management. Plans call for investment in straight plays and the study of Broadway production methods for a period of six months before the group will attempt to produce on its own.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Jeanne Gal, now in Dallas Theatre '54 The Brothers, is a remarkable young actress with looks, style, sensitivity and great variety, raves Morehouse, World Telegram & Sun. Columnist suggests she is good bet for Hollywood and Broadway producers...No one who hasn't done extensive script reading can realize just how bad the over-whelming majority of the entrants are, notes Burr, Playbill, in his introduction to his quarterly list of "Reader's Revenge Comments."

DRAMA MAIL BAG...Recent News piece on Sylvia Siegler's "Show Shop" drew sharp retort by Don Herbert. He informs Sylvester, News, that Show Shop Center was opened by him last Jan and closed by him last April. Siegler was never owner, partner, nor employee in firm. Center closed because of apathy on part of public, not because of lack of cooperation of producers, he corrects.

SUMMER NIGHTS...If you think NYC heat and humidity terrific, Coleman, Mirror, suggests you spent the evening first in an air-conditioned restaurant and then in an air conditioned theatre. It is only during summer you can get tickets to the top shows, he adds...Jones Beach Arabian Nights presents music, acrobats, dancing, gay songs and bright colors, all commodities not easily come by under the mid-summer moon, remarks Herald Tribune editorial. It is a fine thing for the city to have them thus on tap on the mild, surprised shores of Long Island.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Joan Fontaine expects to stay in Tea and Sympathy at least through the summer and fall, she told Herridge, Post. After that it depends on what play or film is offered, which presents a good part. She confessed she can't be happy unless she has potential prize winning material.

' Pros & Cons by TMK '

The theatre ticket problem is not one that will ever be solved by legislation. As long as some insist on seeing a few hit shows, and only the hit shows, the problem will persist in some shape or form. The solution lies in a long range public relation program supported

supported by all elements, ticket buyers included. If the some-time theatre goer can be persuaded to see and enjoy something beside the top musical, more shows will last longer, and tickets will in the long run will be easier to get for all shows.

A flourishing black market in NYC theatre tickets is in operation, charges NYC Citizens Union. The civic group also asked for the ouster of License Commissioner Edward T McCaffrey for permitting the alleged black market to do business. NYC Ticket Brokers, Inc spokesman tabbed charge as typical hot-weather stuff-strictly summer stock. McCaffrey blamed large business houses of "putting on the heat" to get tickets for hit shows at short notice for out of town customers for some of the "black market" activity.

Plays

The Golden Apple will close Aug 7 and play at Carter Barron Amphitheatre, Washington Aug 9-18. It may then return to NY prior to an extended out of town tour... The Champagne Complex will star Patricia Smith... The Tender Trap opens at the Longacre the week of Oct 10... The Rainmaker opens at Cort Oct 28... The Fifth Season has pushed forward its re-opening date to Sept 5... Arabian Nights box-office moved from Rivoli to Broadway Theatre... The Shaggy Dog has changed its title to The Saturday Bus.

Ben Gazzara will co-star with Shelley Winters in Faster! Faster!... Alfred Drake will remain in Kismet to Jan 1 when Bill Johnson will replace him... Leon Belasco and Henry Lascoe added to Silk Stockings... Effie Shannon died at age 87. Her last Broadway appearance was in Arsenio and Old Lace.

Other Broadways

Stratford, Ontario, Shakespearean Festival will continue as an annual event in Canada as a result of the success of this season's sellout for the 3 plays. Tom Patterson, producer, also will tour Canada next season with a production of Saint Joan.

Theatre Film Notes

Sam Spiegel will make a film version of Paul Osborne's Mornings at Seven... Jacqueline Audry is filming Sastre's No Exit in Paris... Robert Anderson has completed a screen version of his Tea and Sympathy for MGM... Walter Matthau makes his screen debut in "The Gabriel Horn" film... Barbara Baxley has a featured role in "East of Eden"... Eva LeGallienne will direct Richard Burton and Maggie McNamara in several Shakespearean scenes of "Prince of Players" film... Kuhn, Loeb and Co, Wall Street investment banking firm, completed financing for filming of Oklahoma.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

Catholic Hour will present Everyman Aug 1 NBC TV 1 30 with Helene Oosthoek, one of Holland's leading actresses playing all the roles. She will use specially designed masks to portray the different characters... Mary Martin will star in Tonight at 8 30 on Leland Hawyard's first color TV show on Oct 18 on NBC TV. David Niven, Joseph Cotton and Cyril Ritchard will play opposite her in 3 Coward skits.

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